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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000861

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SE GRATIQ, S/USSES, AF A/S CARSON, AF/E
NSC FOR MGAVIN
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: SPECIAL ENVOY DISCUSSES BILATERAL ISSUES WITH NCP

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Classified By: CDA Robert Whitehead, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (c)

11. (C) Summary: At the request of the National Congress Party (NCP), Special Envoy Scott Gration met with select members of the NCP trilateral negotiating team for 90 minutes on July 19 to discuss bilateral issues. The substance of issues raised by the NCP was all too familiar, although the tone of the meeting was positive. Dr. Ghazi Salah al Deen, titular head of the NCP delegation, objected to USG references to genocide in Darfur, rejected what he called &personalized8 attacks on President al Bashir, asked if the USG was supporting military procurement in the South, and once again called for a review of the various US sanctions regimes targeted at Sudan. On a positive note, he admitted Sudan,s mistakes in its 2003-2005 Darfur policy, and said that the NCP wanted to meet with its detractors in Washington as well as its friends. SE Gration replied to each point. He urged the NCP to take the policy decisions required to guarantee the stability of Sudan on the ground, and thus permit the turning of a new page in GOS/USG relations. End Summary.

Singing the Same Old Song

12. (SBU) Dr. Ghazi thanked SE Gration for hosting the June 2009 Forum of Supporters Q the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Washington, as well as arranging side meetings for the NCP delegation, which he said would have been unthinkable six months earlier. Ghazi said that the NCP/Government of Sudan (GOS) hoped to build on this foundation, possibly in the context of thQUNGA meetings this fall. He and his colleagues realized the need to make friends and reduce enemies in Washington and were open to all parties, including those traditionally most hostile toward the NCP-dominated Government of National Unity (GNU).

13. (C) Dr. Ghazi continued that given the positive tone of the Washington visit, the NCP had been surprised by President Obama,s reference to Darfur and genocide in the Accra speech on Africa. The NCP objected to such terminology because, in their view, it is not true. The NCP was willing, he added, to accept blame if it was responsible for admitted policy mistakes in Darfur in 2003-4, but these actions did not meet the standard for genocide. No country other than the US had used this term, a UN mission dispatched to Sudan did not find grounds for a declaration of genocide, and even the

International Criminal Court had stepped back from prosecuting Sudanese officials on these grounds. Ghazi said that the NCP/GOS perceived the use of genocide terminology as a direct, personalized attack on al Bashir, and & if we weaken Bashir, we weaken ourselves.⁸ He expressed his hope that that the reference to genocide would not be repeated.

¶4. (SBU) Ghazi said that to improve ties with Washington, the NCP knew that it needed to approach the US Congress and work through the U.S. business community. He noted that sanctions made this difficult. The GOS could obtain licenses to purchase US agricultural commodities, for example, but was not able to buy agricultural equipment or spare parts. Despite long and deep ties between Sudanese and US academic institutions, sister university programs remained off limits. Sudan needed to hire lobbyists to explain its positions, he said, but this too had been thwarted by sanctions.

¶5. (C) He noted that Sudan had welcomed a July 2009 US trade delegation to the South, but had been disappointed to learn that two well-known producers of advanced military systems had participated. The NCP was aware that the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) was actively seeking to purchase advanced anti-aircraft and other weapons systems, a bad omen for successful partnership between the SPLM and NCP in the GNU. The final and most crucial test of USG willingness to deal fairly with Sudan would be Sudanese removal from the U.S. List of State Sponsors of Terrorism. MFA Undersecretary Muttriff Sidiq chimed in on the question of frozen assets. A medical doctor/businessman complained about restrictions on travel to the US by medical researchers, as well as the blockage of spare parts for MRIs and other advanced medical equipment, which he claimed had created a crisis in the health sector.

But with a Happier Tune

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¶6. (SBU) Dr. Ghazi said that despite the remaining problems in the bilateral relationship, Sudan was encouraged by continued dialogue. The more the two sides talked, the more the NCP perceived that there was no hidden agenda on the American side. Due to this, the NCP/GOS was ready to reach out and seek meetings with its greatest detractors in Washington, including those in Congress. The GNU was prepared to invite "Save Darfur" officials and others to visit Darfur and see first hand the realities on the ground.

¶7. (C) SE Gration replied to the NCP on each point. As far as genocide terminology was concerned, he said the past could not be changed. Legal experts had determined this term had been applicable earlier in the Darfur conflict, and this was a reality, as the US puts together a new strategy on Darfur. He said that at this time, the essential point is to move beyond the past. Sudan should create conditions on the ground that would convince everyone that genocide in Darfur was a thing of the past and no longer a salient issue. The GOS could help achieve this by encouraging the unity of rebel groups in Darfur, engaging them in Doha, and resolving the proxy conflict with Chad. On the ground in Darfur, the GOS could remove all obstacles to the full and effective delivery of humanitarian assistance. It should move toward recovery by creating security conditions that would encourage the voluntary return of IDPs to their places of origin. The GOS especially needed to redouble its efforts to achieve a rapprochement with Chad that would take all proxy rebels forces on both sides out of the field.

¶8. (C) SE Gration continued that in addition to moving ahead on Darfur, the NCP needed to implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) with the South. Over the past 100 days the trilateral consultations had helped break a number of CPA-implementation logjams, but the final test would be actions rather than words. As far as sanctions were concerned, the Special Envoy said that the U.S. was examining the various regimes to see where it might make

sense to unwind certain provisions. SE Gration noted that it was essential that the NCP realized, however, that the imposition of sanctions had taken place over a long period. He cautioned that it was unrealistic to expect that it would not take time to unwind even those sanctions that might no longer apply.

¶9. (C) SE Gration referred briefly to Ghazi's allegation of USG support for rearmament of the South, noting that the two US companies in the Juba trade delegation had been seeking respectively the sale of a computer system and contracts for construction projects, not arms sales. Language in the Congressional Foreign Assistance legislation prevented the USG from providing lethal weaponry to any party in Sudan, and the USG was neither privy to nor engaged in other outside sales to the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS), including that of tanks. The SE observed that it was his view that the GoSS could best use the bulk of its resources for development and the betterment of the population in the South. A legal expert on the SE,s team addressed misperceptions on the NCP aside about the Office of Foreign Assets Control's (OFAC) licensing requirements, especially as they pertained to obtaining legal counsel in the US or purchasing parts for medical equipment.

¶10. (C) Comment: The NCP remains stuck in a Mobious loop as far as sanctions and genocide terminology are concerned, and some of its members continue to harbor suspicions that regime-change in Khartoum is the USG,s ultimate goal. However, the NCP would like to put its Darfur and Southern problems behind it. NCP insiders wish to see Sudan, at some point, rejoin the community of nations as a full-fledged member. They see the USG as the key to breaking the cycle in which they have been turning, and the positive tone of their interaction with the SE reflects this desire.

¶11. (U) This cable was cleared by SE Gration.

WHITEHEAD